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Small, interpersonal process groups may be useful in preparing teachers for work in inner-city schools. The intensive group experience can result in improved communication and interpersonal relationships (not only, for instance, between student teachers and cooperating teachers, but also in their interaction with professional colleagues, pupils, and family). Schools generally have not recognized in a curricular or formal sense the fact that feelings are learned behaviors. With inner-city youth particularly, the ability to verbalize is essential to the process of becoming aware, but we generally have failed to apply the verbal symbolic method to interpersonal, psychological type problems. Educators have tended to be skeptical of such techniques as T groups and sensitivity training, partly because group processes have not been conceptualized as learning activities and partly because caution has not been exercised in their structuring and facilitation. Some suggestions: The group activity should be regarded and described as a teaching-learning situation, each participant being encouraged to behave normally. It should be made clear what is to be done and what to expect. Emphasis should be on the description of behavior, not on its evaluation. Groups should function in a natural everyday environment without gimmicks; membership should not vary from meeting to meeting; and planning must provide adequate time and opportunity for involvement by each member. (JS)

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SMALL GROUP PROCESSES IN PREPARING TEACHERS FOR INNER-CITY SCHOOLS

In this paper, I will advance some reasons for considering the use of small, interpersonal process groups in teacher education. I will voice some concerns with regard to the manner in which some of these groups are conducted and I will offer several suggestions for making them function more effectively.

Assuming good organization and competent facilitators, what are some of the reasons for considering the use of the group experience in teacher education? More specifically, what does an intensive group experience offer toward the preparation of teachers for work in inner-city schools? The basic, overall reason is that improved communication and interpersonal relationships should result. Parenthetically, let me add that I see little difference between these. When one can communicate, his relationships improve. When his interpersonal transactions get better, he invariably is communicating more effectively. This improvement in personal transaction ability, if it occurs at all, usually extends to areas outside the student teacher-cooperating teacher relationship. Both types of participants report increased effectiveness and confidence in communicating and relating to professional colleagues, pupils, and family members. For example, one student teacher group member, after one of several sessions, went home and confronted a surprised and gratified parent about her dissatisfaction with their inability to talk and to interact meaningfully together. They went to work on the problem. Now they can and they do. Other group members have described similar learnings.

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One of the aspects of communication in which teacher groups can furnish otherwise unavailable learning opportunities concerns the use of verbal processes for dealing with concerns of a feeling and emotional nature. Paradoxically, our culture teaches us to be verbally adept with problems involving the tangible and material aspects of living and verbally inept when we are confronted with emotional, feeling and human-interaction type problems. We put rockets in to space with much more assurance and financial support than we deal with the perplexities of interpersonal transactions. This happens because there are two types of learning which take place in the culture and in the schools. The first of these is the recognized, formal, information type of learning. We are aware of this type and we know how to manage it fairly well. We know something of the kind of input or influence necessary to achieve certain results. The second type of learning occurs informally. It takes place largely by accident rather than by design.

Schools generally have not recognized in a curricular or formal sense the fact that feelings also are learned behaviors. Feelings enter into what we do and determine its effectiveness even more surely than our knowledge of verbal syntax or quadratic equations. But teaching, for the most part, is planned and organized as though these emotional aspects do not exist. So it is that how we feel and what we do with our feelings tends to happen by chance and by accident.

Teachers do indeed have an emotional impact upon students. They do indeed elicit emotional reactions and teach their students ways of feeling. But teachers generally are unaware of their influence. They do not know what feeling behaviors they reward or what kinds of stumuli, cues and reinforcements they inadvertently supply. We may teach some youngsters to

drop out just as surely as we teach others arithmetic. For that matter, neither is the learner aware that he is learning and that his behavior is being modified when he is engaged in informal type learning. Let me give you an example. I recently administered a Wechsler intelligence to a ten-year-old boy. I noticed that he was under a great deal of pressure to be right and to do well. He would not risk a try if he thought that he might be wrong. Toward the end of the testing he indicated that he was tired and that his stomach hurt and his head ached. His father stated that the boy often reacted to stress in this manner. A week later the boy was taken to a medical doctor. Physically he appeared to run short of blood sugar between meals and to feel ill and to have headaches when this happened. The doctor advised that the boy's teacher be given candy to give him whenever he began to feel this way.

Now, examine the stimulus-response-reinforcement learning implications. Here were parents, a teacher and a doctor, all with the best of intentions, involved in rewarding and teaching an undesirable behavior pattern. All were unaware of the probable effect of their actions. A couple of dextrose wafers carried in a shirt pocket to be self administered at a certain time each day would have had less reinforcing-accidental-learning consequences.

When one is conscious that he is learning and when the teaching process is admitted and formalized, he can discriminate. He may choose to learn or not to learn, what to learn and how much. When one learns by accident and without awareness and discrimination, however, he is as apt to be victimized as he is to profit from the process.

Just as one may be unaware of part of what he teaches, so he also may be unaware of what he communicates. Often his words do not fit his actions and sometimes neither may be in line with his feelings. But the responses one gets are intelligible only to the degree that he knows of

the messages he sends. Unwittingly one may furnish stimuli for precisely the reaction which he finds most upsetting. With inner-city youth it is essential that these messages are not ambivalent. As a professional colleague once told me when I asked the secret of relating to these youngsters; "First, you have to be for real."

The ability to verbalize is essential to the process of becoming aware. And one must admit and know that a process or a behavior exists if he is to deal with it. In a sense a person gains concepts and generates and possesses ideas by talking about his situation and its problems. Men design skyscrapers and engineer ballistic missiles before the fact. They talk out, deal with, and eliminate most of the errors before they happen. Courses of action and their probable effects are determined. Operations are made explicit. Confidence is generated and risk is minimized. What takes place is not by virtue of chance or accident or trial and error. According to Hall in The Silent Language:

> The analysis of one's own culture simply makes explicit the many things we take for granted in our everyday lives. Talking about them. . . changes our relation with them. We move into an active and understanding correspondence with those aspects of our existence which are all too frequently taken for granted or which sometimes weigh heavily upon us. Talking about them frees us from their restraint.

Despite our effectiveness with the verbal symbolic method when dealing with the material and tangible, however, we generally have failed to apply this method to our interpersonal, psychological type problems. We talk freely about such things as automobiles, weather and sports but when it comes to verbalizing about the feelings we have about ourselves and others, we become relatively inept. Most of our cultural agencies reinforce this ineptness and a good deal of our accidental type teaching operates to deny both models and experience toward the verbal solution of interpersonal problems. If one is to contact those who teach this method of dealing with concerns and tension, he must be either sick or enlightened

enough to seek a psychiatrist, or a psychotherapist or enroll in some sort of a therapy group. In our culture, this is not easy. In order to do it, one has to admit chat he is not self sufficient. He must take the inferior position accorded to those who need help. He must be willing to be assessed as weak and a little peculiar by his self-styled stronger associates. He almost must be strong enough not to need help at all.

Teachers appear to find this especially difficult. While one logically might expect industry and big business to be most mechanical, most inflexible and most impersonal in dealing with people and while he might expect educators to be most open and most human, such is not the case. In fact, Rogers has found the opposite to be true. My own experience with teachers interpersonal group tends generally to support this. Naturally there are exceptions but I have found elementary teachers to be most willing and most able to verbalize about themselves and their feeling and interactions with youngsters. Junior high teachers are somewhat less willing and high school teachers often are quite resistant. Younger teachers become involved in groups with greater facility than older teachers and women tend to be more open about their feelings than men. Educators in general tend to be more conservative, more cautious and more reticent about participating in groups than other professional groups.

There are some good and sensible reasons for this wait-and-see attitude on the part of teachers. In the first place, interpersonal process groups, "T" groups, sensitivity groups, basic encounter groups and the like have come to be viewed by some as a hippie-like, love-in, turned-on, flower-children approach to human relationships. Second, these groups are seen by teachers as outside the province of education and more properly the business of psychologists and psychotherapists. Group processes have not been con-

ceptualized as learning activities. They are more apt to be endowed with a sort of crystal-ball mysticism and suspected as capable of leaving an indelible stamp upon the psyche; as capable of brain washing and other secret, underhanded psychological manipulations. Description of group processes more often portray a sort of religious conversion experience. The practical application of interaction techniques toward personal and professional competence too often is overlooked.

Strangely enough, a third and most important reason for being cautious about interpersonal groups lies with their popularity. New and innovative ideas often are invested with cure-all and panacea type qualities. They are apt to be included when unnecessary for band-wagon, status reasons. Many institutes, in the past few years, have been programmed for some kind of group interaction dynamics. Poorly conceived sensitivity training experiences have been included in order to be up to date. Popularity has outstripped knowledge and expertise. At the best some of these groups have provided members with psychological titillation and succeeded in making them more touchy than sensitive. At the worst, they have been responsible for triggering emotional upsets severe enough to place participants in psychiatric wards.

Statements of professional ethics for educators, counselors and psychologists list no items specifically delineating responsibilities to participants for those who plan and lead such groups. One ethically cannot interact with a student or a counselee or a client with reference to his personal and emotional concerns without some obligation to continue until his problems are talked out. Yet people and professional organizations operate over-the-weekend or three-day-convention sensitivity groups and bid a blythe and irresponsible goodby at the end. Too often this has been just long enough to surface problems and create pressures without providing the time and

follow up necessary to deal with them. Too often personal concerns are intensified rather than ameliorated.

The value of any tool or technique is dependent upon the skill and the planning ability of the user. And the caution which must exercised in its adaption and use is in direct proportion to the potential and power of the technique. There can be little doubt concerning the impact which a group experience can have upon participants. It can help them to deal with personal concerns or it can intensify them. But the group experience is almost never innocuous. It is not a process to be initiated lightly. With this in mind, I would like to offer some suggestions for structuring and facilitating interpersonal process groups in order that participation will be more acceptable to teachers and in order that the risk of conducting such groups will be minimized.

First. The interpersonal process group should be regarded and described as a teaching-learning situation. No one is psychoanalyzed. Participants are involved in the process of learning more effective behaviors. Groups furnish the opportunity to make more explicit the kinds of stimuli, cues and reinforcements which each member supplies toward the learning of others. And groups help members to become more aware of their own reactions to the stimuli, cues and reinforcements supplied by others. Groups attempt to teach participants how to observe behavior and to solicit and provide feed back regarding the effectiveness of that behavior.

Members learn how to verbalize and hence to become aware of the feelings which arise from the manner in which they interact with others. Because group members become more conscious of their behavior, its impact and the reasons for it, a greater degree of control becomes possible. That is, conscious control of anything is not possible until one learns of it and about it.

Second. Each participant is recognized as having an effective and potent control system. And he is encouraged to apply it; to behave normally in order that the controls which he uses in his interpersonal transactions can be observed and made explicit through verbalization. He is not required or pressured, as in many groups, to be less defensive or more open. His feeling of vulnerability is not increased. Rather it is important that defenses are recognized and accepted as necessary parts of behavior patterns or control systems. The purpose of groups is to help participants to become more competent; to feel more confident and less vulnerable and hence to be able to defend, not less, but better. For it is as true with human interactions as it is with international relationships that the one who can defend is less apt to feel attacked and is less apt to feel compelled to defend. A person does not move or advance from a defensive position, he is either immobilized or he retreats. Little positive growth or change is possible. To cause an individual to feel vulnerable, attacked and defensive is automatically to impede his progress.

Despite their apparent conviction that group interaction promotes personal growth, it is my feeling that many group leaders and protagonists manifest attitudes toward the process which inadvertently limit its success. Articles, presentations and conversations which deal with interpersonal process groups use such tell-tale terminology as: break down defenses, overcome resistance, open the person up, learning of one's self is a struggle, painful and the like. They give the impression that control is to be relinquished and that participants must abandon themselves to exterior forces.. Groups can be, and should be presented as challenging, exhilarating and, to borrow from Leonard's Education and Ecstasy, even ecstatic learning experiences.

A third suggestion for planning an interpersonal process group is to communicate to participants explicitly and completely what is to be done and what they can expect. A terminology for recognizing, understanding and verbalizing about what goes on is essential. This not only is necessary for learning but it is necessary in order that members feel challenged rather than threatened and see themselves as participants rather than being manipulated.

A primary goal of education for our times is the development of independent learners; People who know how to find out on their own and who can apply the process for the rest of their lives. The Coleman study recognized the sense of control which a student has over his own destiny to be a crucial factor for his achievement. This is as true for teacher learning within groups as it is for student learning in school. A person must be permitted some control before he can know that he has any. He must recognize his effect before he can feel responsible for it. He must feel responsible before he can stop blaming others for his condition and see any hope that he can change or improve it.

Groups provide each member an opportunity to do this by furnishing him with feedback concerning the effectiveness of his behaviors. The concept of feedback has been developed by technology in connection with cybernetics and systems analysis. A system can be anything which takes in something or which has input, to use the correct terminology, and which delivers output. The reactions of the other members can be termed output. Feedback consists of reintroducing a part of the system's output back into the system as information about the effectiveness of the output process. An understandable example is furnished by the thermostat in your house. It uses a part of the output (temperature) to control and to regulate the subsequent output of the system. Individuals can be

thought of as systems operating within the group system. When their input or behavior is ineffective, output in terms of the feelings of others is fed back to them through verbalization and interaction. This provides both reason and direction for effective behavior change and learning. Without feedback the individual or system may continue to operate ineffectively because it behaves by accident or because it is unaware of the effects of its actions. Without feedback teachers continue to make the same interpersonal-transaction mistakes year after year; to defeat themselves in the same manner time after time.

Feedback is extremely valuable but it is difficult to get from people. In the words of the well known advertisement, "even your best friends won't tell you". They may move away and leave you to wonder whether you forgot your Listerine or your Right Guard but they won't provide explicit feedback. Groups teach participants the process of providing, soliciting and using feedback. They teach people how to become self regulating systems or independent learners. There is, however, an important difference between supervision and evaluation which is imposed and feedback which is solicited. In the first instance the control is exterior and the person is other directed. In the second instance the control is exercised consciously from within and the person is self directed.

So it is that interpersonal process groups are an effective way of helping teachers to take charge of their own personal and professional growth. If teaching could be organized on team bases, opportunities for feedback and verbalization in the form of interacting peers, continuously could be available.

Fourth, another suggestion for facilitating group interaction is that emphasis should be upon the description of behavior and not upon its evaluation. Words like good, bad, right, wrong, to blame or at fault

operate to make involvement threatening. When they are used, participants are more apt to deny subjectively than to affirm objectively. It is important to realize that all behavior is effective and controlling in the sense that it furnished stimuli and causes reactions even though it is not always effective in the sense that it sometimes provokes and results in rejection. A person may defeat himself with behaviors which he has learned accidentally when he is unaware of their effect. But he usually does not defeat or minimize or put himself down consciously and purposefully.

Fifth, if possible, it is better if a group can function without crutches or gimmicks in a natural and everyday environment. Participants need to learn to rely upon their own ability to interact, to share feeling and to communicat effectively. I am not at all convinced that fatigue or liquor or drugs or role playing or anything artificial ought to be depended upon to turn people on or to get things going. There generally is enough in the reality of the moment for meaningful transaction to take place. An individual is his inhibitions and defenses. He needs to learn to deal with them rather to have them by passed or overlooked or broken down.

Sixth, another suggestion for facilitating group movement is that membership should not vary from meeting to meeting. The entry of new members or the reentry of old members always leaves someone out of contact needing to catch up on what has transpired and out of tune with the process. Before the group can begin to function on meaningful, personal levels again, the ice must be rebroken and feelings of trust and acceptance must be reestablished. The dynamics and flavor of a group can change markedly with the attendance or absence of a single individual. Communication and interaction patterns are different. Continuity is broken and,

in a sense, the group must start over with a new transaction configuration with every change of membership.

A seventh and final necessity for planning a successful and meaningful group experience is to provide adequate time and opportunity for involvement for each member. Learning to emply the verbal-symbolic method for dealing with interpersonal problems is a basic reason for participation in process groups. When these kinds of concerns arise, it is important that there is time available to the group for dealing with them. Periods of two hours or more with some flexibility as far as ending is concerned are essential. Too large a group (more than ten participants) prevents this sufficient consideration of concerns just as surely as a lack of time.

When an individual shares a personal concern or requiests feedback from a group he is entitled to the group's time until the issue is considered to his satisfaction. The old view that every participant should become overtly involved at every session is out of place here. If another member or problem is allowed to displace the first and to command the group's attention, the first member has nothing but evidence of the group's lack of concern for him and an unsolved but more clearly recognized problem on his hands. He is under more, rather than less, pressure. He has more, rather than fewer, doubts about his value as a person. This well may be what happens when group experiences make psychiatric care necessary. It is the reason why time, sufficient attention to shared concerns and a knowledgable group facilitator are absolutely essential for a successful group experience.

Interpersonal process groups are serious business but they have tremendous potential as a teaching-learning environment. We have known for a long time that effective education involves doing or actual ex-

perience. Just as one has learned how to be what he is as a result of interpersonal relationships so he must look to interactions with people if he is to learn to be different or more effective. If one is to learn, he must behave. I think educators desperately need to learn to teach people ways of dealing with interpersonal problems. An individual's right to be educated is a total, not a partial, right. We can't ignore this much longer and continue to claim the right to educate. But one cannot teach nor practice what he does not know. Our first concern must be with teachers and the relationships which they maintain.